

FACT SHEET

AVIAN INFLUENZA



PUBLIC

Avian Influenza

What is Avian influenza?

Avian influenza, or bird flu, is a rapidly spreading viral disease that mainly infects birds.

Is it contagious?

- Yes, it is contagious
- Although rare, humans and other mammals can be vulnerable to the disease
- The disease may spread by direct contact with infected birds or objects contaminated by them
- Birds are the most susceptible animal
- The disease exists naturally in wild birds
- Person-to-person spread is extremely rare

How is avian influenza treated?

- In birds, there is no known treatment
- Antiviral medications may be effective for human cases.
- Although there are vaccines available for poultry, there is not a vaccine that covers all 15 strains of the disease. Therefore, since there is no way to determine which strain will infect a flock, vaccines are generally not practical to prevent infection in birds

Are there public health risks?

- Although rare, humans and other mammals can be vulnerable to the disease.
- Most human cases have occurred in people with close contact to infected birds or their environment.
- If you have had contact with infected birds or are showing symptoms, contact your physician immediately.
- There have been no reported cases due to consumption of fully-cooked meat.

For More Information, contact:

Nebraska Department of Agriculture (402) 471-2341.